

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2015



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Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
Washington, DC 20240

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## I. Introduction

### *Environmental Justice History*

#### *What is Environmental Justice?*

Environmental justice refers to meeting the needs of underserved communities by reducing disparate environmental burdens, removing barriers to participation in decision making, and increasing access to environmental benefits that help make all communities safe, vibrant, and healthy places to live and work.

In 1994, Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations*, (<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/executive-orders/pdf/12898.pdf>), set forth an order for Federal agencies to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands.” The Executive Order makes environmental justice a part of federal agencies missions.

In addition, the Executive Order called for the creation of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG). The EJ IWG is comprised of the Department of the Interior (DOI) and 16 other Federal agencies plus White House staff to fact find, receive public comments, and conduct inquiries concerning environmental justice. The roles of the EJ IWG are to guide, support and enhance federal environmental justice and community-based activities. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the convener of the EJ IWG. The EJ IWG has established committees to develop guidance and support the following topic areas: goods movement, civil rights, strategic planning and implementation, rural communities, regional committees, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Native American peoples, public participation and Climate Change. The EJ IWG website is located on an EPA website at: <http://www3.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/interagency/>.

During 2015, the DOI continued to work to incorporate the provisions of EO 12898 within the scope of its overall mission. The DOI also continued to be an active member in the EJ IWG and participates in its collaborative efforts to support healthy and economically viable minority, low-income, and tribal communities.

## ***DOI's Mission***

Protecting America's Great Outdoors and Powering Our Future.

"The U.S. Department of the Interior protects America's natural resources and heritage, honors our cultures and tribal communities, and supplies the energy to power our future."

## ***DOI's Environmental Justice Vision Statement***

"To provide outstanding management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to us in a manner that is sustainable, equitable, accessible, and inclusive of all populations."

## ***DOI's Organization***

The DOI is comprised of several offices within the Office of the Secretary and ten bureaus, each with a unique mission - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The DOI employs approximately 70,000 dedicated and skilled employees to carry out its mission and roles and responsibilities.

## ***About this Annual Progress Report***

This document serves as the DOI's Annual Implementation Report document the DOI's actions that meet the intent of Executive Order 12898 and the DOI Environmental Justice Strategic Plan 2012-2017. This report provides 2015 data for the established performance measures. This data is used to determine our progress and/or need to make further adjustments. This report also highlights several of the programs, policies, activities, and collaborative efforts the DOI engaged in during 2015. These programs, policies, and activities are not all inclusive of the DOI's efforts to implement environmental justice but show DOI's ongoing commitment and progress toward the integration of environmental justice into all applicable programs, policies, and activities.

This report follows an environmental justice annual implementation report template provided by the EPA and includes information on place-based initiatives; community outreach; climate change adaptation work; targeted assets; how the DOI is meeting its performance measures; and information on the IWG's work in 2015. The beginning of each section will include an introduction followed by examples of the DOI office and bureau activities in 2015 concerning that section's topic.

The 2015 annual report includes only a snapshot of the work that is being conducted among the 10 bureaus and the more than 70,000 employees of the DOI that involves environmental justice communities. In order to keep the report manageable in size, approximately one example per bureau is presented for each topic in the EPA template. If you have questions on what additional

work a bureau is doing, please reach out to us at the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (Cheryl Kelly – [cheryl\\_kelly@ios.doi.gov](mailto:cheryl_kelly@ios.doi.gov) or 202-208-7565) or a list of bureaus EJ coordinators can be found in section II.

## II. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION AT DOI

The DOI Environmental Justice Working Group (DOI EJWG) is chaired by the Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC), under the senior leadership of the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget and includes representatives from each of the DOI bureaus as well as the Department’s Office of Civil Rights.

Each of DOI’s bureaus has a Primary Environmental Justice (EJ) Coordinator who works directly with OEPC in carrying out the DOI’s environmental justice activities. The Primary EJ Coordinator is the bureau or office staff person typically at the headquarters level whose duties and tasks include helping to integrate EJ throughout their particular bureau or office. Duties may also include carrying out day-to-day environmental justice tasks, internal and external coordination, public outreach, public contact, and acting as the liaison with their field level and regional offices. Each bureau has regional and field level offices that assist in local and regional environmental justice initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Sutherland, BOR’s EJ Coordinator in 2015, left BOR in March 2016. We thank him for his years of work as BOR’s EJ Coordinator and for helping with the information provided in this report.

This working group collaborates with OEPC in implementing the provisions of Executive Order 12898 throughout the DOI. The DOI EJWG participates in both internal and external collaborative environmental justice efforts. The DOI EJWG informs DOI management and staff as well as the public about DOI's activities that support environmental justice.

### ***Previous Environmental Justice Strategies***

Executive Order 12898 directs Federal agencies to prepare a strategic plan on environmental justice. In response, in 1995, the DOI established a committee comprised of representatives from each of the DOI's bureaus to develop the 1995 DOI Environmental Justice Strategic Plan (1995 EJ Plan). The 1995 EJ Plan was adopted and integrated into DOI policy which increased the visibility of environmental justice throughout the Department.

The 1995 EJ Plan outlined a path to ensure the costs and risks of the DOI's environmental decisions did not fall disproportionately upon minority, low-income and tribal populations and communities. The 1995 EJ Plan built on longstanding partnerships and sought to create new relationships to solve environmental problems.

In August 2011, the DOI joined with other Federal agency members in the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898* (2011 MOU). This MOU reaffirmed the Federal government's commitment to environmental justice. The MOU calls on each Federal agency to review and update existing environmental justice strategic plans as applicable and appropriate. At that time, the DOI published a 2012-2017 Environmental Strategic Plan to meet the MOU provision to update agency strategic plans.

The DOI's 2012-2017 EJ Strategic Plan set forth five major goals to guide the DOI in its pursuit of environmental justice:

- Ensure responsible officials are aware of the provisions of EO 12898 and are able to identify and amend programs, policies, and activities under their purview that may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations;
- Ensure minority, low-income, and tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department's decision making processes;
- The Department will, on its own or in collaboration with partners, identify and address environmental impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations;
- Use existing grant programs, training, and educational opportunities as available to aid and empower minority, low-income, and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities; and

- Integrate the DOI’s environmental justice strategies with its Title VI of the Civil Rights Act enforcement responsibilities to improve efficiencies while preserving the integrity of Title VI and environmental justice activities.

### **III. EJ STRATEGY REVIEWS/UPDATES:**

In 2015, DOI began the process to update the DOI 2012-2017 Environmental Justice Strategic Plan. The update to the strategic plan is based on input and review by our bureaus and offices. It meets the goal of the 2011 MOU to evaluate and update strategic plans periodically. Highlights of the draft 2016-2020 Environmental Justice Strategic Plan include:

- Retention of the five goals in the 2012-2017 Environmental Justice Strategic Plan;
- New examples of how DOI is currently meeting those goals; and
- New action items for DOI to implement and continue to meet the goals laid out in the strategic plan.

It is anticipated that the draft 2016-2020 Environmental Justice Strategic Plan will be available for public review in early spring 2016. We look forward to any comments on the draft strategic plan. If you are interested in reviewing the draft strategic plan, please reach out to OEPC and we can send you the draft when available for public review or visit the DOI’s Environmental Justice website (<https://www.doi.gov/oepec/resources/environmental-justice>); the document will be uploaded when ready for review.

### **IV. NOTABLE AND INNOVATIVE PLACED-BASED COLLABORATION**

This section reflects progress on collaborating with federal, state, local, tribal, and other partners on place-based initiatives. Place-based initiatives are often defined as initiatives that include stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a particular place such as a neighborhood or a community. Some examples of place-based collaboration with communities that the DOI undertook in 2015 include:

#### **BOEM: Working with Tribes to Identify Culturally Significant Places and Resources**

BOEM Environmental Studies Program is currently working in partnership with the University of Rhode Island and the Narragansett Indian Tribe to develop a science-based, standardized “best practices” methodology to identify submerged ancient Native American archaeological resources when evaluating proposed Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) wind-energy projects.

In addition, the Environmental Studies Program is working on a study called, “Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes” in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric



Administration (NOAA) (Maritime Heritage Program and Office of National Marine Sanctuaries). NOAA and BOEM participated in intertribal workshops with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Makah Tribe, and the Yurok Tribe in Washington State to develop a transferable, transparent, and cost-effective method for tribes with a connection to the coast to document places and resources significant to their communities and outside agencies, enhancing their capability for consultation.

BOEM Headquarters and Office of Renewable Energy Programs are currently engaged in joint outreach efforts with the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission for any future BOEM activities on the Atlantic Coast.

#### OSMRE: Engaging the Next Generation

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement offers youth and volunteer opportunities for the public, with particular focus on serving minority, low-income, and tribal communities in accordance with the Secretarial Order for Engaging the Next Generation.

A OSMRE/ Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) volunteer, with the San Juan Watershed Group in Aztec, New Mexico, organized an educational presentation with students from the Navajo Preparatory School in September 2015. The lesson informed students about the Gold King Mine spill, historic mining, acid mine drainage, mining policy, water science, hydrology, and other related topics. OSMRE/VISTA has established partnerships with other schools in the Farmington area to better engage Navajo students during the VISTA program.

In April 2015, the OSMRE Western Regional office partnered with Trips for Kids Denver Metro to coordinate an inaugural mountain biking and learning for 25 students in Lakewood, Colorado. Trips for Kids provides biking experiences for underserved, urban youth in the Denver Metro area. During the activity, OSMRE employees educated students about public lands stewardship, OSMRE's mission, and careers in federal government.

#### BOR: Water Improvement Projects

*Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project:* In 2015, BOR implemented a water pipeline project designed to serve the Navajo and Jicarilla nations. The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project is a major infrastructure project that creates a reliable municipal and industrial water supply from the San Juan River to the eastern section of the Navajo Nation, southwestern portion of the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and the city of Gallup, New Mexico via about 280 miles of pipeline, several pumping plants, and two water treatment plants. The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project is designed to provide a long-term sustainable water supply to meet the future population needs of approximately 250,000 people in these communities by the year 2040 through the annual delivery of 37,764 acre-feet of water from the San Juan Basin.

*Pojoaque Basin Water Supply Project and EIS (Aamodt)*: In 2015, BOR continued to work on the Pojoaque Basin Water Supply Project. When completed, the project will provide a rural water system to the Pueblos of Nambé, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, and Tesuque, and will also provide facilities to serve County water customers in the Pojoaque Basin. The project will resolve decades of litigation over Indian water rights in New Mexico. The objective of the project is to:

- Provide a source of water for drinking, fire suppression, and future growth for residents in the Pojoaque Basin;
- Improve alluvial recharge on portions of the Rio Tesuque with channel modifications;
- Provide a barrier dam and infiltration project on the Rio Pojoaque;
- Develop a design for Rio Grande water diversion facilities; treatment, transmission, storage and distribution facilities and well fields; and
- Determine whether additional construction projects, proposed and paid for by the four Pueblos, Santa Fe County, or a Pojoaque Basin Regional Water Authority, are needed to fully use the water delivered by the Pojoaque Basin regional water supply or to improve existing or develop new water-related infrastructure.

BOR engaged the impacted tribes when developing the Navajo-Gallup and Pojoaque Basin water projects to ensure appropriate input and successful implementation. In addition, work by the Albuquerque Area Office and Regional Native American Affairs Office secured irrigation improvements for 16 New Mexico Pueblos through Rio Grande Pueblo Rehabilitation Act activities.



Using funding provided by the BOR Native American Program, the Pueblo de Cochiti was able to install irrigation pressure pipelines, terracing, and laser leveling farm fields to significantly improve irrigation efficiency and crop production.



Jerry Qunitana, farmer at Pueblo de Cochiti, shows off his alfalfa field that has been irrigated with pressure pipelines and laser leveled using BOR funds. A tractor cutting the alfalfa is visible in the background. Prior to BOR funded improvements, fields were barely producing a crop; it was so difficult to irrigate using earthen lined ditches and non-leveled farm fields that many farmers had given up.

## NPS: Urban Agenda

In April of 2015, the NPS launched the NPS Urban Agenda with the goal to build relationships among urban parks and programs. The Urban Agenda calls all urban park practitioners to embrace three bold principles:

1. Be Relevant to All Americans by reaching new audiences and stories that represent our nation's diverse history, by diversifying our workforce to become a true reflection of the American population, and by looking at "parks" in new ways as innovative urban landscapes for new uses;
2. Activate "ONE NPS" by aligning NPS parks, programs, and partnerships; and
3. Nurture a Culture of Collaboration by working in collaboration both internally and externally to better serve communities.

As part of the Urban Agenda, ten urban model areas have been selected to provide illustrative examples and demonstrations for how NPS can apply its full portfolio of resources in strategic ways. A diversity of urban areas, large and small, were chosen to reflect: (1) parks embedded in urban areas, (2) parks adjacent to urban areas, and (3) the presence of NPS program but no physical presence of a park unit.

These model areas will test new ways of working collaboratively and enable these communities to learn from each other through an urban model network that will also connect with the broader NPS. Urban Fellows placed in these model areas will play a key role in facilitating collaboration among the NPS, other federal and state agencies, city governments, and other partners. The ten model cities are: Boston, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Jacksonville, Florida; New York City, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Richmond, California; Richmond, Virginia; St. Louis, Missouri; Tucson, Arizona; and Washington, DC.

The NPS Urban Agenda aligns closely with the DOI's youth initiative, which will engage the next generation of leaders and stewards through recreation, education, volunteerism, and employment. Specifically, by 2017, the DOI will convene coalitions in 50 cities across the country to create more opportunities for young people to play, learn, serve and work outdoors. The ten model cities in the Urban Agenda are part of this movement, and will play an important role in achieving the DOI and NPS goals to engage new audiences.



Through a partnership between the National Park Service, Denver Parks and Recreation, and Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK), the Urban Ranger program offers educational, professional development, and employment opportunities to underserved and underrepresented youth from the Denver metropolitan area.

#### BLM: Farmworker Institute of Education and Leadership Development Conservation Corps

BLM entered into a partnership with Farmworker Institute of Education and Leadership Development Conservation Corps (FIELD) to provide trail and conservation work on public land. Founded by Cesar Chavez in 1978, FIELD's mission is to "promote economic and social prosperity in rural communities for Latinos, working people, and their families," and is committed to effect positive change in rural communities.

Participants receive funding, develop self-esteem and gain skills that might lead to careers and further education and training. BLM receives cost savings, proves itself to be a good neighbor, and achieves additional environmental restoration and more knowledgeable citizens who understand more fully the value of natural and cultural resources.

#### USGS: New York Water Science Center coordination with the Shinnecock Indian Nation, EPA and IHS

Starting in 2014 and continuing into 2015, the USGS New York Water Science Center and the Indian Health Service (IHS) held semi-annual meetings with the Shinnecock Indian Nation to coordinate activities to replace failing cesspools with conventional septic systems to improve health and safety of Shinnecock tribal citizens. The IHS also works closely with the Shinnecock Indian Nation and EPA to obtain additional funding to replace individual wells with public water connections. Construction on these new water service connections will begin in 2016.



## FWS: Tribal Grants

*“Tribal Wildlife Grants give us an opportunity for federal and state agencies to work with tribal fish and wildlife partners in the conservation of our shared and highly valued natural heritage; a heritage that we will pass on to future generations of all Americans.”*

- *Director Dan Ashe, FWS*

In 2015, the FWS awarded nearly \$4.2 million in Tribal Wildlife Grants to American Indian Tribes in 13 states. The awards will support 22 fish and wildlife conservation projects that benefit a wide range of wildlife and habitat, including species of tribes’ cultural or traditional importance and species that are not hunted or fished.

Since its inception in 2003, the competitive Tribal Wildlife Grants program has awarded more than \$68 million to American Indian tribes, providing support for more than 400 conservation projects. The funds also provide technical and financial assistance for the development and implementation of projects that benefit fish and wildlife and their habitats, including non-game species.

The grants have enabled tribes to develop increased management capacity, improve and enhance relationships with conservation partners, address cultural and environmental priorities and help train the next generation of conservationists by engaging tribal students interested in fisheries, wildlife and related fields of study. Some grants have been awarded to support recovery efforts for federally listed threatened and endangered species.

## BLM: Rural Fire Protection

BLM, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, work with at-risk communities to promote community and homeowner involvement in mitigating wildfire risk, reducing hazardous fuels and accomplishing treatments that increase forest health and resilience. In 2015, the BLM created a position in the fire program and dedicated \$500,000 in additional resources to coordinate training and preparedness for Rural Fire Protection Associations and volunteer fire departments to assist in fighting rangeland fires.

## **V. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

The DOI recognizes that outreach with and encouraging the participation of the affected community is one of the most effective ways to identify potential environmental justice issues. Public participation is a fundamental component of the DOI’s program operations, planning activities, and decision-making processes. Good public participation entails open, ongoing, two-way communication, both formal and informal, between the DOI and its stakeholders. Regular, interactive communication enables all parties to learn about and better understand the viewpoints and concerns of each group impacted or affected by decisions that might have a disproportionate environmental or health impact on a specific community.

Below are a few examples of the work of DOI during 2015 to reach out to environmental justice communities:

#### OSMRE: Environmental Justice integration into National Environmental Policy Act documents

OSMRE ensures that the public is aware of actions it is reviewing, and is aware of opportunities for them to become involved. OSMRE provides opportunities for meaningful involvement by providing opportunities for public input during the development of NEPA documentation and through seeking comment on Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) permit applications when OSMRE is the regulating authority.

#### *Four Corners Power Plant and Navajo Mine Energy Project*

In 2015, OSMRE issued a final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the Four Corners Power Plant (FCPP) and Navajo Mine Energy project. This project required extra community engagement related to environmental justice. The Navajo Nation is the beneficial owner of surface and minerals lying beneath Navajo Nation lands impacted by this Project; whereas the United States holds legal title to surface and minerals. The Hopi Tribe is the owner of the surface over which one of the transmission lines servicing the Four Corners Power Plant traverses. Renewal of the right-of-way for this power line was one of the actions associated with the project.

For the FCPP and Navajo Mine Energy Project, OSMRE advertised upcoming public meetings in thirteen newspapers; sent postcards to 629 individuals on the project mailing list; and mailed separate stakeholder notification letters to 205 federal, state, and local government agencies and elected officials. OSMRE also provided public service announcements to announce the dates and times of the public meetings on 31 local radio stations. The announcements were translated and recorded in Navajo and Hopi. The English release and the Navajo and Hopi audio files were disseminated to radio stations based on the language of the radio station. Additional outreach for the project included: fliers announcing public meeting dates at various community locations such as community centers, post offices, libraries, grocery stores, gas stations, trading posts, town halls, chapter houses. The extent of OSMRE's effort was necessary to ensure that tribal community members and other interested parties in remote locations were reached.

OSMRE provided Tribal interpreters at formal opportunities for public comment, such as scoping meetings and public hearings. Translation was provided for both verbal and written comments, and translated summaries were also provided upon request. Meetings are held in locations that will encourage Tribal participation, such as chapter houses and cultural centers. At public meetings held on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations, OSMRE provided Navajo and Hopi interpreters to translate oral comments and also assist attendees in conversing with project team members.

#### NPS: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

Section 10 of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to make grants to museums, American Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations for the purposes of assisting in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of Native American “cultural items,” including human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. The NPS has awarded these grants since 1994. From 1994 through 2015, a total of 863 grants have been awarded. In 2015, \$237,384 was awarded in repatriation grants and \$1,509,615 was awarded for consultation grants.

#### USGS: Harlem-Bronx River Watershed, New York

The USGS New York Water Science Center Coram Office has compiled 100 plus years of water-quality data related to the Harlem River from a variety of sources, including the New York City Environmental Protection, Riverkeepers, Inc. and EPA STORET. The water quality data were being summarized in a report and evaluated for trends.

USGS is working with the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) to better understand the current quality of the stormwater runoff and how much pollutant loading to the Harlem River will be reduced by an innovative pop-up wetland. The goal is to better understand the types and relative concentrations of roadway contaminants that drain from the Major Deegan Expressway into the Harlem River. Results will provide a metric for accounting the amount of contaminated runoff captured for design and establishment of a recreational park at Pier V along the Harlem River near Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, N.Y. The USGS will continue to be involved in scheduled community outreach programs at the site. The New York Water Science Center, along with support and equipment from the North Carolina and Massachusetts Water Science Centers, has contributed monitoring this to this pop-up wetland.

Since 2011, the USGS has been participating in the annual Harlem River Festival, an event which has grown into a two-week-long, borough-wide outreach effort that brings the local communities together through educational activities. The USGS and BCEQ continue to work with faculty and students from minority serving institutions (such as Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College, Lehman College, and Borough of Manhattan Community College) to help collect and interpret water-quality information and sustain green infrastructure projects.

#### BOEM: Collaboration with Tribes

BOEM is in the process of developing its 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Program. BOEM has reached out and continues to engage federally recognized tribes who reside or have historical connections to the lands adjacent to the proposed planning areas. This includes 30 Tribes along the Atlantic Coast, 10 Tribes in the Gulf of Mexico Region, and 15 Native Villages throughout Alaska. Regional EJ Representatives are also continuing to meet with members of the public and incorporating public input for ongoing and proposed leasing activities, not limited to scoping meetings related to EIS development. On the North Slope of Alaska, this coordination requires plane travel to remote communities and often times, hiring a community translator. The Alaska Region has a unique relationship with the Native Villages adjacent to BOEM jurisdiction, in that both parties work together to navigate the multiple uses of the Arctic OCS.

### BOR: The Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010

The Congress passed the Claims Resolution Act (Public Law 111-291, December 8, 2010) which contained the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2010 (Settlement Act). The Settlement Act identifies a number of federal, state, and tribal actions for the Crow's use and management of their water rights. The Settlement Act authorizes funds to: 1) repair and replace infrastructure to provide reliable irrigation water deliveries; 2) provide quality potable water for municipal, rural, and industrial uses to residents throughout the reservation; 3) develop energy projects; 4) provide storage allocation of water in Bighorn Lake; and 5) execute the Crow Tribe-Montana Water Rights Compact. Additional benefits and opportunities of the Settlement Act are to improve efficiencies of systems, provide increased protection of natural resources, and provide mutual benefits for tribal and non-tribal users.

BOR is identified as the lead Federal agency for carrying out the purposes of the Settlement Act and has been working closely with the Crow Tribe-Water Resources Department to achieve the purposes of the Act. The BIA is participating as a cooperating agency and BOR has entered into two Cultural Resources Programmatic Agreements with the Crow Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Community engagement for the Settlement Act has been extensive, with a project mailing list of over 30 interested agencies, elected officials, and organizations, along with 1,200 landowners and tribal members. To date, public outreach has involved meetings and scoping sessions, project announcements and updates at Tribal meetings, project webpages, newspaper announcements, and posting of project materials at post offices throughout the reservation.

### BLM: Chief Dull Knife College and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe-Ecoregional Ethnographic Assessment

Chief Dull Knife College and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe are partnering with the Montana BLM to produce Ecoregional Ethnographic Assessments that can be integrated into developing ecoregional direction for the future management of public lands in Montana and the Dakotas. The pilot effort builds upon existing information to prepare an ecoregional ethnographic analysis of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe's aboriginal occupation and use of the Northwestern Plains and Middle Rocky Mountain Ecoregions. The goals of the study are to:

- document, evaluate, and map places of traditional religious or cultural significance to the tribe;
- identify culturally important plant and animal species, and their associated ecosystems, that are critical for the maintenance of Northern Cheyenne culture and traditions;
- delineate appropriate conservation elements; and
- assess the potential effects of identified change agents upon identified conservation elements.

These efforts aid and empower minority, low-income and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities.



### USGS: Tribal Youth Workshop on Water

This year was the second year that the USGS, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service's Mount Shasta Ranger District and the College of the Siskiyous in Weed, CA, provided a workshop on water resources to Native American youth with ancestral ties to Mount Shasta. Water is a critical resource in both terms of abundance and quality in northern California and a special concern of Native Americans in the area. This workshop aims to provide students and their mentors background on water source, discharge, age, and quality information, both in the classroom and in the field so that they can use that information to better understand and manage this vital resource. The workshops have served students from the Pit River, Quartz Valley and Karuk tribes. Many of the Karuk and Quartz Valley students were interns for their respective natural resource departments while some of the Pit River students were interns working on restoration projects with the non-profit organization California Trout. In addition to classroom lectures on the water cycle and quality, students collected water quality data from the Big Springs-reach of the upper Sacramento River and then analyzed their data in the computer lab. The workshop was supported with funding provided by a USGS Technical Training in Support of Native American Relations (TESNAR) Program grant from the USGS Office of Tribal Relations.

### DOI: Re-Establishing Government-to-Government Relationship with Native Hawaiian Community

*"The United States has a long-standing policy of supporting self-governance for Native peoples, yet the benefits of the government-to-government relationship have long been denied to Native Hawaiians, one of our nation's largest indigenous communities,"*

*- Secretary Jewell*

In 2015, the DOI announced a proposal to create an administrative procedure and criteria that the Secretary of the Interior would apply if the Native Hawaiian community forms a unified government that then seeks a formal government-to-government relationship with the United States. Under the new proposal, the Native Hawaiian community — not the Federal government — would decide whether to reorganize a Native Hawaiian government, what form that government would take, and whether it would seek a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

The proposal, which takes the form of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), builds on more than 150 Federal statutes that Congress has enacted over the last century to recognize and implement the special political and trust relationship between the United States and the Native Hawaiian community. The NPRM follows a robust and transparent public comment period as part of an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) process that began last year and included public meetings. More than 5,000 members of the public submitted written responses to the ANPRM, and they overwhelmingly favored creating a pathway for re-establishing a formal government-to-government relationship.

The Native Hawaiian community has not had a formal government since the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1893. In 1993, Congress enacted the Apology Resolution, which offered an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for its role in the overthrow and committed the Federal government to a process of reconciliation. As part of that reconciliation process, the DOI and Department of Justice jointly issued a report in 2000 identifying as its lead recommendation the need to foster self-determination for Native Hawaiians under Federal law.

#### USGS: Water Quality Working Group - South Platte River, Denver, CO

Through the Water Quality Working group, the USGS is tasked with developing assessments of key water quality parameters utilizing data from several partner organizations. The expected product is a web based tool for linking a question (e.g., is it safe to swim in the South Platte at Confluence Park?) with information about particular contaminants of concern, and ultimately with summaries of the raw data. The group surveyed partners, accumulated data, and checked data for quality. The group started work on the template for the first contaminants to be assessed, which will be E. Coli and selenium.

The USGS Water Quality Working group is also redeveloping a degraded detention pond into a destination natural area in an underserved Denver neighborhood. This project will educate the community about the sources, fate, and threats to the water their communities depend on. Project activities include removing one acre of invasive plants, educating 265 community members, planting 10 trees, engaging 150 volunteers, removing 30 pounds of trash, and educating 200 students.

The Water Quality Working group is developing a plan to improve water quality and education the public about the water quality of Bear Creek and to develop a watershed protection plan. A key component of this project is the Master River Steward Job Training program which will engage youth from Denver and Sheridan. These stewards will participate in water quality sampling and engage the broader community through education, outreach, stewardship activities, and recreation activities in the watershed.

#### FWS: Tribal Relations

The Director of FWS moved the National Native American Liaison position to report directly to him to emphasis the priority of the FWS's ongoing work with Tribes. This year, the draft Native American Policy for the FWS was posted for public comment. The purpose of the Policy is to further the government-to-government trust responsibility to Indian tribes by establishing a framework with federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native Corporations.

## **VI. TARGETED RESOURCES TO OVERBURDENED, UNDERSERVED, AND ECONOMICALLY-DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES**

This section of the report highlights the work the DOI is doing to target resources to overburdened communities. A majority of these resources came in the form of grant funding but additional resources were provided through scientific studies that evaluate impacts to environmental justice communities or training/teaching workshops with the goal to inform and help environmental justice communities. A few examples of DOI's resources targeted towards environmental justice communities include:

### OSMRE: Hosting Volunteers and Interns

In 2015, OSMRE continued to coordinate its OSMRE/VISTA and OSMRE/AmeriCorps programs in addition to providing technical support for the DOI's VISTA program. Partner DOI bureaus included the NPS, FWS, BLM, and BIA. This year, the VISTA programs commissioned 145 VISTA Volunteers (66 OSMRE/VISTA, 79 DOI/VISTA) to address local impoverishment and community needs in 2 U.S. territories and 33 states.

In 2015, OSMRE hosted 18 interns in the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Interns gained professional experience in OSMRE offices (Office of Communications, Division of Reclamation Support, Division of Regulatory Support) and complete assignments that contributed significantly to OSMRE's mission. In a 2013 survey, 22 percent of former OSMRE interns identified with a minority group. This competitive internship program strategically partners with institutions that serve minority and low-income communities to provide students with a meaningful experience that they otherwise might not have. Partners include Cal State DC Scholars, The Washington Center, University of California DC, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and various institutions nationwide.

OSMRE Interns are mentored by OSMRE senior staff and conduct research projects related to outreach, community development, environmental stewardship, and poverty alleviation. The OSMRE Intern program is heavily focused on professional development for the student. In addition to their individual assignments, interns are immersed in new cultures through field trips in Washington, DC, and site visits to the Appalachian Coal Country Team Support Office in Beckley, WV. In 2016, OSMRE plans to expand the internship program to provide more opportunities in OSMRE offices nationwide.

### BIE: Funding for Investments in Native Youth Success

*"The investments we're announcing today underscore the Obama Administration's commitment to self-determination by putting tribal communities in the driver's seat for developing a strong and prosperous future for Indian Country,"*

*- Secretary Jewell.*

In 2015, the DOI, in conjunction with the Department of Education, announced the award of more than \$5 million in grants to help Native American youth become college and career ready.

Under the new Native Youth Community Projects (NYCP) program, the Department of Education is making grants to a dozen recipients in nine states that will impact more than 30 tribes and involve more than 48 schools. These awards are a demonstration of President Obama's strong commitment to improving the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native children and a key element of his Generation Indigenous "Gen I" Initiative to help Native American youth.

The DOI is responsible for the management of more than 180 BIE Schools, three of which are recipients of these Native Youth Community Projects program grants. These grants provide tools to tribes to not only assist in the transition from federal to tribal control of school operations and management but also ensure college readiness for the next generation of Native American leaders. Each grant will support a coordinated, focused approach chosen by a community partnership that includes a tribe, local schools, and other organizations. Among the projects:

- Alaska Cook Inlet Tribal Council Inc., \$600,000 – The Cook Inlet Tribal Council, in partnership with the Anchorage School District, will administer Journey Ahead, a middle-school intervention designed to improve the college and career readiness of Alaska Native and American Indian students in Anchorage. The project will stress outcomes key to developing college and career readiness, including academic achievement, attendance, and a respectful school climate with caring adults.
- North Dakota (Wahpeton) Circle of Nations School, \$440,217 – The Circle of Nations School Native Youth Community Project will improve education indicators for college and career readiness through a community-wide approach providing academic, social, health, and other supports promoting school engagement and commitment to learning, which the project partners identified as the primary barrier among students at the BIE-funded boarding school that serves students in grades 4-8.
- New Mexico Native American Community Academy Foundation, \$472,806 – The Native American Community Academy Foundation (NACA) will expand its network of high-performing schools dedicated solely to indigenous education in Northwest New Mexico. Following a 3-year pilot phase, the NACA-Inspired Schools Network emerged out of community efforts to establish the first network of high-performing schools that seek to reimagine what indigenous education and the school experience can be for Native students by creating schools of academic excellence and cultural relevance

#### BLM: Challenge Cost Share Agreement with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa

Through this agreement the BLM provides the Bois Forte Heritage Center (BFHC) \$10,000 annually to monitor archeological sites on BLM-administered islands in Lake Vermilion, Minnesota. The BFHC visits the sites twice a year to monitor any damage to the sites from erosion, looting, and recreational use.

This agreement is positive for both parties: the Bois Forte Band takes an active role in the management of archeological sites in their ancestral territory while enabling the BLM to carry out their duties for the monitoring and protection of cultural resources.

#### FWS: Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program

The FWS works with private landowners, Tribes, schools and others which include environmentally overburdened, underserved, and economical distressed communities to support local and Federal conservation strategies. Private land ownership comprises nearly 70% of all holdings in the United States. Three-quarters of the wetlands remaining in the United States are privately owned. Wetlands are vital to both people and wildlife by providing natural flood water storage, recreational opportunities, ground water supply, pollutant filtration, and irrigation water provisions. The Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program (PFW) provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes. The PFW Program recently celebrated its 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary; having worked together with more than 45,000 landowners and 3,000 conservation partners. The Program successfully restored more than 1,207,553 acres of wetland habitat; 3,991,891 acres of upland habitat and 12,501 of streams.

#### OIA: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Program – American Samoa

*These infrastructure projects are vital to economic development in American Samoa as they bolster the territory's transportation, health, education, and water systems,"*

*- Assistant Secretary Kia'aina, Insular Areas*

In 2015, the OIA provided more than \$9 million in grant funding to American Samoa through the Office of Insular Affairs' (OIA) Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Program. The funds support Governor Lolo Moliga's priorities and much needed improvements to critical infrastructure in the territory. Grants awarded were as follows:

- \$1,000,000 to implement maintenance and repairs to public schools as established in a MOU entered into by the OIA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Territory of American Samoa to address critical health and safety structural repairs. The deferred maintenance reduction program will begin in January 2016, and current funds will be used to address electrical upgrades, fire alarm installation, plumbing system needs, and roofing repairs. Implementation of this MOU is guided by the Assessment of Buildings and Classrooms (Insular ABCs) Initiative and follows a USACE visit to American Samoa in July 2015 to finalize the operating agreement, identify work plan priorities and conduct a school facilities management workshop for American Samoa Department of Education staff. The Insular ABC assessment shows that deferred maintenance items in the Territory total \$13 million.
- \$300,000 to the Department of Port Administration to provide the required local match for federal funding received from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The FAA

projects include improvements to the Airport Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting Facility, upgrades to runway lights, and a new security perimeter fence at the Fiti'uta Airport.

- \$1,939,180 to supplement prior year grant funding and local funding for the design and construction of a ferry vessel to provide reliable passenger/cargo transportation to and from the Manu'a Islands. Not only will the vessel improve services and trade between the capital Pago Pago and the Manu'a Islands but will also provide safer, more comfortable and more efficient travel. The vessel, being built to meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements, will be 140 feet in length, and have capacity for 100 passengers, cargo, diesel fuel for Manu'a power plants, vehicles and other heavy equipment. The total project cost stands at \$13 million with OIA providing \$9 million in CIP funding and American Samoa providing an additional \$4 million.
- \$940,000 to the American Samoa Shipyard for procurement of equipment and supplies needed to restore the 3,000 ton slipway, the shipyard's top revenue generator and only provider of dry-docking services. The slipway will be restored to meet required tuna fisheries and maritime industries standards making this project of high economic development value and a priority for the Territory as a whole.
- \$500,000 to provide a fully equipped and operational Primary Care Center in Faga'alu. An existing building that houses Physical Exams and the Well Baby Clinic will be renovated and upgraded to include six exam rooms, three medical offices, a staff conference room, two full locker rooms for clinical staff, and two lavatories. The center will also be expanded to add a patient waiting area, receptionist desk, nursing area, and space for records management.
- \$100,000 for Samoana High School to furnish a new two-story classroom building which houses eight classrooms, a computer laboratory and restrooms. Construction on the building is ongoing at the high school using prior year CIP funding.
- \$1,000,000 to the American Samoa Power Authority for improvements to the water distribution system. Upgrades to water mains will allow for installation of fire hydrants in neighborhoods that currently lack these fire protection measures.
- \$1,000,000 for the Pago Pago International Airport to remove a public safety hazard by relocating the fuel tank farm from its current location at the rear of the airport public parking lot. Existing equipment that is approaching the end of its useful lifespan will also be replaced.
- \$464,850 of funding will be set aside for implementation of a long-term preventative maintenance program for all CIP-funded infrastructure projects in American Samoa

## OSMRE: Reclamation Funding to Clean Up Abandoned Coal Mines

*“While these grants will fund critical reclamation projects, generate well-paying jobs, and help to restore communities, it represents just a small fraction of the work that remains. We have many years of work ahead before mine reclamation is complete.”*

*- Director Joe Pizarchik, OSMRE*

OSMRE announced the availability of the Fiscal Year 2015 Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation fund grants, which provide more than \$226 million to states and tribes to reclaim abandoned coal mines. The AML grants are funded in part by a fee collected on all coal produced in the United States, and enable 28 eligible states and tribes to help eliminate dangerous conditions and pollution caused by past coal mining.

In the 38 years since Congress enacted the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA), OSMRE has provided more than \$8 billion to states and tribes to reclaim more than 380,000 acres of high-priority hazardous abandoned mine sites. Past AML-funded projects include closing dangerous mine shafts, reclaiming unstable slopes, improving water quality by treating acid mine drainage, and restoring water supplies damaged by mining.

## USGS: Evaluating Water Resource Health and its Impacts on the Surrounding Community

### *Trinity River Restoration:*

The Trinity River in northwestern California supports one of the West’s important salmon populations and has historically been an important resource to the life and culture of the Yurok and Hoopa Tribal Nation. The Trinity River and its salmon runs have been negatively impacted by extensive past dredging and placer mining. Mercury, used in gold mining, has been released throughout the watershed and bioaccumulated in the food web in the river. The Trinity River Restoration Program is mandated to implement river restoration projects to increase the salmonid resource and restore the health of the river for use of Yurok and Hoopa Tribal Nations and other users of the river. The USGS continues to provide research and consultation to the Trinity River Restoration Program which is managed by the BOR. USGS research has been used to minimize the release of mercury and methylation of mercury during river restoration projects and provide a scientific basis for future restoration projects. The river restoration projects have made a start in improving the significantly depleted salmonid resource, and restoring the river to its former health.

### *Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC):*

USGS is working cooperatively with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to determine current water-quality, hydrologic, and ecological conditions of the Yellow Dog and Salmon Trout Rivers in the Yellow Dog Plains area which might have been degraded by mining activity, road construction, and other related human development. The primary objectives of this cooperative project are to assess streamflow and groundwater inputs to the Yellow Dog and Salmon Trout Rivers, including concentrations of selected water-quality contaminants such as metals and nutrients; and sediment. The study will



help to determine if water quality and hydrology are changing with human development in the area.

#### *Kootenai Tribe of Idaho:*

USGS is working with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho to evaluate streamflow and sedimentation conditions in the Kootenai River that may be affecting the sustainability of white sturgeon. The cooperative study will help evaluate changes in hydrologic and sediment conditions that were caused by the construction of Libby dam and other alterations to the natural stream systems. The study will also help in the development of tools to assess the feasibility of remediation scenarios used to enhance the white sturgeon spawning substrate and habitat.

#### *Blackfeet Nation:*

USGS is working with the Blackfeet Nation in Montana to provide technical assistance and training on groundwater monitoring and water quality sampling. In the past three years, oil and gas exploration and development has increased dramatically on the Blackfeet Reservation, primarily in the Bakken formation and adjacent units. Efforts are focused on the development of a groundwater monitoring plan to address both water quality and quantity issues for the reservation. The addition of groundwater data to the existing surface-water monitoring program would help the Blackfeet Nation to identify: (1) current groundwater and surface water conditions; (2) instances of groundwater or surface water contamination; and (3) any unexpected or unnatural decline in levels of ground or surface water.

#### NPS: Supporting Local Food Bank

In 2015, Rock Creek Park, a unit of the NPS, donated about 700 pounds of venison to a Washington, DC non-for-profit organization, DC Central Kitchen. The meat was used in the thousands of healthy meals that DC Central Kitchen prepares daily for multiple nonprofit partners, including homeless shelters, rehabilitation clinics, and afterschool programs. The DC Central Kitchen provides approximately 5,000 well-balanced, healthy meals each day for those in need. The venison donation was a result of the deer reduction operation within the park.

#### DOI Technical Advisory Group: Outreach on Contaminants in Watershed

Sediment and soils in the Upper Columbia River Basin south of the border between Canada and Washington State might be enriched in metals due to historical releases of contaminants from upstream smelters that processed mineralized rock. The Spokane and Colville tribal lands are located in this watershed, and there are concerns that the metals might impact the health of humans and aquatic organisms. The DOI Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprised of USGS, the NPS, FWS and BLM is providing basic information about metal concentrations in soils and river sediment, and how those metals may affect the health of aquatic organisms (e.g., fish,





insects, and mussels).

### FWS: Urban Wildlife Conservation Programs and Refuge Partnerships

In recognition of demographic shifts occurring throughout the country, FWS cultivated new conservation constituencies, including minority groups who live in urban settings under the *Urban Wildlife Conservation Program*. The Program provided many opportunities to engage urban communities and is governed by the Standards of Excellence:

1. Know and Relate to the Community
2. Connect Urban People with Nature via Stepping Stones of Engagement
3. Build Partnerships
4. Be a Community Assess
5. Ensure Adequate Long-Term Resources
6. Provide Equitable Access
7. Ensure Visitors Feel Safe and Welcome
8. Model Sustainability

With 80 percent of the U.S. population residing in urban communities, helping urban dwellers with employment, training opportunities and gaining knowledge and skills to become stewards of natural and cultural resources are priority goals of the FWS. The *Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships* are long-term, place-based partnerships that engage urban communities in conservation on lands the FWS does not own or govern. The partnerships provide residents outdoor experiences connected to nature. Many major cities do not have a nearby refuge. To address this challenge, the FWS 17 Urban Wildlife Partnerships are:

1. New Haven Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (New Haven, CT)
2. Forest Preserves of Cook Co Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Chicago, IL)
3. Houston Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Houston, TX)
4. Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Partnership (Providence, RI)
5. Lake Sammamish Urban Wildlife Partnership (Seattle, WA)
6. Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Baltimore, MD)
7. L.A. River Rover Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Los Angeles, CA)
8. Valle de Oro Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Albuquerque, NM)
9. Condor Kids (Santa Barbara, CA)
10. Wallkill Connection: Fostering Urban River Stewards (Yonkers, NY)
11. Habitat Is Where It's At (New Orleans, LA)
12. Community Greening and Restoration Project (Denver, CO)
13. PSJA, Preserving for Future Generations (Pharr/San Juan/Alamo, TX)
14. Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship (NESt) (Philadelphia, PA)
15. South Fork Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Atlanta, GA)

16. Anchorage Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Anchorage, AK)
17. Springfield Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership (Springfield, MA)

NPS: Grants for Underrepresented Communities through the Historic Preservation Fund

*“..we are especially mindful of our charge to tell America’s story through places that house the histories of distinct communities that have come together to form one nation with a common destiny.”*

*- Director Jon Jarvis, NPS*

In 2015, NPS announced \$500,000 in grants to help fund 10 projects that will document historic properties associated with underrepresented communities in the National Register of Historic Places. Working with various states, Indian tribes, and local governments, the grants will fund preservation projects at sites representing Latino, African American, Asian American, LGBTQ populations, women, and Native American communities.

The grants are supported through the Historic Preservation Fund, which was authorized by Congress in 1976 under the National Historic Preservation Act. These grants are funded through a FY2015 appropriation. The federal investments are expected to leverage more than \$258,000 in non-federal funds. The monies provided to the fund come from a small portion of Outer Continental Shelf oil lease revenues.

Grant-supported projects include surveys and inventories of historic properties associated with communities underrepresented in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), as well as the development of nominations to the National Register for specific sites. These projects will increase the recognition, understanding, and preservation of resources associated with underrepresented communities.

2015 Recommended Underrepresented Community Grants:

- Alaska: Organized Village of Kake Nomination Project -- \$33,153 to support the preparation of National Register nominations for two historic properties associated with Native Alaskan (Lingit) history in Kake;
- California: City of Los Angeles Asian American Historic Context Project -- \$72,000 to develop historic contexts and survey materials associated with the city’s Japanese, Filipino, Thai, Korean, and Chinese American populations;
- California: City of San Francisco Civil Rights Project -- \$55,000 to support the preparation of three National Register nominations and a citywide inventory for properties associated with the advancement of civil rights for African-American, Asian-American, Latino American, LGBTQ populations, and women;

- Maryland: Calvert County Piscataway Indian Archaeology Multiple Property Nomination Project -- \$47,000 to prepare National Register nominations for six sites associated with a Piscataway Indian settlement in rural Maryland;
- Minnesota: Fort Snelling Historic District National Historic Landmark Update Project -- \$60,000 to update the Fort Snelling Historic District, National Historic Landmark designation to recognize the contributions of African-American, Native American, Japanese, and women's history;
- Montana: Butte, Montana Ethnic Atlas and National Register Nomination Project -- \$56,000 to inventory and map the ethnic heritage of the Butte-Anaconda National Historic Landmark, recognizing important enclaves of African-American, Chinese, and Arabic-speaking (Lebanese) peoples and develop two new National Register nominations;
- New York: New York City Casitas Survey and Nomination Project -- \$46,000 to complete intensive level survey of New York City's Puerto Rican casitas with a model traditional cultural property nomination for one site;
- North Carolina: African-American Resources in North Carolina Nomination Project -- \$70,000 to prepare 10 National Register of Historic Places nominations for resources in three categories: Rosenwald schools, African-American resources in the city of Durham, and African-American cemeteries in Raleigh;
- Virginia: African-American contribution to Spotsylvania County Heritage -- \$3,847 to increase the number of listings on the National Register of Historic Places as a continuation of a previous award grant;
- Wisconsin: Wolf River Archaeological District National Register Nomination Project -- \$57,000 to develop inventory and National Register nomination for prehistoric and historic resources along Wolf River corridor.

#### DOI: Payments in Lieu of Taxes Program

*"Rural communities help define the character of our diverse and beautiful country, contributing significantly to our nation's economy,"*

*- Deputy Secretary Michael Connor*

In 2015, approximately 440 million dollars were provided to local governments through the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. The PILT program is an important funding source for rural communities, including low-income communities, as they plan for basic public services like housing, transportation, emergency services, and outdoor recreation sites.

PILT are federal payments to local governments that help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal lands within their boundaries. Eligibility for the PILT program is reserved for local governments (mostly rural counties) that also provide vital services, such as public safety,

housing, and transportation. These jurisdictions provide significant support for national parks, wildlife refuges, and other federal recreation areas throughout the year. PILT seeks to compensate them for their support and foregoing tax revenue from these federal lands.

Congress appropriated nearly \$405 million for PILT payments made to counties in June 2015. Congress also appropriated an additional \$37 million in PILT funding, which became available in October 2015.

The payments are made annually for tax-exempt federal lands administered by the Federal government, including the BLM, the NPS, FWS.

## **VII. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN – PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The DOI's 2012-2017 Environmental Justice Strategic Plan establishes DOI's environmental justice vision and outlines five goals that are intentionally broad in scope and designed to guide the bureaus in the development of their individual work plans; provides strategies to carry out those goals; and includes performance measures to determine the effectiveness of its efforts.

Over the past few reporting periods, the DOI has made adjustments to some of its performance measures or made a determination that a few were not feasible for reporting purposes. This annual report includes the current performance measures to meet the five goals and how DOI is meeting those measures.

### **Goal #1**

Ensure responsible officials are aware of the provisions of EO 12898 and are able to identify and amend programs, policies, and activities under their purview that may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations:

Performance Measures	2017 Target
Percentage of responsible officials trained.	75% of the target population.
Each region of a relevant bureau or office has an individual(s) designated as an Environmental Justice Coordinator.	100%

### **Goal #1 - Performance Measure #1 – “Percentage of responsible officials trained.”**

In late 2014, OEPC in collaboration with the DOI's University and DOI EJWG completed an on-line environmental justice training course specifically for the DOI's responsible officials, managers, as well as others. The training is designed to raise the awareness of environmental

justice, and the responsibility for its incorporation into the DOI's mission. The on-line training became available to employees in 2015 and is available to all DOI employees through the DOI Learn platform. Since implementation, 173 DOI employees have completed the course. DOI continues to provide information to employees about the course and is evaluating ways to increase participation.

Additional training opportunities for employees are provided by individual bureaus. BLM, NPS, and FWS each have developed training materials for their employees regarding environmental justice.

**Goal #1 - Performance Measure #2** - "Each region of a relevant bureau or office has an individual(s) designated as an Environmental Justice Coordinator."

Since 2011, all relevant offices and bureaus have identified Environmental Justice Coordinators at the headquarters and regional levels. During 2015, the Department **maintained the level of EJ Coordinators at 100%**. This number may fluctuate during the course of the year due to personnel changes such as reassignments, transfers, and retirements.

- BIA: Within the BIA EJ issues are largely addressed through the NEPA process. The EJ Coordinators are located in each of the 12 BIA Regional Offices; this is a collateral duty of the Regional NEPA Coordinators. Currently, BIA has 12 Regional Office Coordinators and one primary EJ Coordinator located in Washington, DC.
- BLM: The BLM is organized into 12 State Offices. In 2015, all BLM State Offices had a formally designated an EJ Coordinator.
- BOEM: BOEM has an EJ Coordinator within each of its three regions - the Alaska, Gulf of Mexico, and Pacific Regions, and the Office of Renewable Energy Programs, as well as a primary EJ Coordinator in the Office of Environmental Programs at the BOEM Headquarters in Sterling, Virginia.
- BOR: The BOR manages EJ related responsibilities primarily at the regional level. The Civil Rights Division, located in Denver, CO, coordinates EJ reporting activities. Additionally, both the Environmental Compliance Division in Denver and Native American Affairs Office in Washington, DC have EJ responsibilities.
- OSMRE: OSMRE headquarters located in Washington DC; OSMRE also has three Regional offices – the Appalachian, (Pittsburgh), Mid-Continent (Alton, IL), and Western (Denver) Regional offices. The Regional offices are comprised of field and area offices. The EJ function (and OSMRE EJ Coordinator) is managed out of the Headquarters Office in Washington, DC and is located in the Program Support Directorate, Division of Regulatory Support. Each of the three regions has designated a Regional EJ Coordinator.

- FWS: The full-time EJ Coordinator is located at the Headquarters in Arlington, VA, in FWS's External Affairs Office. The FWS has eight regions. Each region has identified a staff member as an EJ contact.
- USGS: The EJ Coordinator is the National Tribal Liaison located in the Office of Tribal Relations-Office of Science Quality and Integrity at USGS Headquarters, Reston, VA.
- NPS: The NPS's EJ Coordinator is located in the Washington DC, Headquarters office. The NPS has seven regions; each region has identified staff as an EJ contact.
- OCR: The Office of Civil Rights includes a representative on the DOI's EJWG. Including the representative, three other employees within the OCR, working on environmental justice issues.
- OEPC: The DOI Environmental Justice Coordinator is located within the headquarters building of the Department of the Interior in Washington DC. Throughout 2015, OEPC maintained a contact for the DOI Environmental Justice Coordinator.

A directory of DOI's EJ Coordinators with contact information is maintained and made available on DOI's EJ web site at: <http://www.doi.gov/pmb/oepec/environmental-justice.cfm>.

## Goal #2

Ensure minority, low-income, and tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department's decision making processes.

Performance Measures	2017 Target
Annual percentage of major federal actions having a potential for EJ implications that also qualify as Departmental actions with tribal implications.	The Department established a baseline of 47.2% in 2012. The Department's target for 2017 is 65%.
Annual percentage of environmental impact statements that identify minority and low-income communities and, if they exist, provide opportunities for meaningful involvement.	The Department established a baseline of 55.1% in 2012. The Department's Target for 2017 is 100%.

**Goal #2 - Performance Measure #1** - "Annual percentage of major federal actions, having a potential for environmental justice implications that also qualify as Departmental actions with tribal implications."

For 2015, **43.4% of DOI's major federal actions that had the potential for environmental justice concerns also qualified as an action with tribal communities.** This performance measure is intended to help the DOI identify major federal actions that may have a disproportionate environmental or health impact on tribes as well as other tribal implications, and aid in the decision making process. DOI is reporting a 21.6% (65% in 2014 – 43.4% in 2015) decrease in the identification of major federal actions having environmental justice/tribal implications for 2015.

### Project Highlight:

#### BIA: National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

Federal actions funded or approved by the BIA are undertaken on behalf of federally recognized tribes and their tribal members. Federally recognized tribes and tribal programs are directly involved in BIA decision-making through consultations. Since major federal actions in BIA require appropriate NEPA reviews, BIA measures meeting goal 2 by the ratios of EAs and EISs (NEPA documents) that involve tribal consultation. The numbers of BIA NEPA documents vary and all major federal actions approved or funded by the BIA have tribal implications. The NEPA process requires consultation and includes identification of environmental justice issues.

BIA records NEPA documents through its' "NEPA Tracker" which is a bureau-wide tracking system. BIA recorded 3,655 EAs in NEPA Tracker for FY 2015. All EAs provided tribal consultation for EJ issues. The metrics for the ratio of EISs in which federally recognized tribes participate in as cooperating agencies is compiled from an internal database maintained by the BIA NEPA Coordinator. There are currently eight EISs that are in process; tribes are serving as cooperating agencies in all of them.

**GOAL #2 - Performance Measure #2** – “Annual percentage of environmental impact statements that identify minority and low-income communities and, if they exist, provide opportunities for meaningful involvement.”

DOI is reporting **67% of environmental impact statements** that identify minority and low-income communities that also included meaningful involvement for 2015. The number of major federal actions proposed by the DOI will vary from year to year. This performance measure is intended to help DOI identify communities that might be impacted by NEPA related actions, specifically those impacting minority and low-income communities, and reinforces the requirement to provide opportunities for meaningful involvement. DOI is reporting a 6% (73% in 2014 - 67.0% in 2015) decrease for 2015.

### Project Highlight:

#### OSMRE: Tennessee Lands Unsuitable for Mining Project

In 2015, OSMRE continued progress on an EIS to consider a petition for OSMRE to designate

certain areas in the State of Tennessee as Lands Unsuitable for Mining per 30 CFR 762. The EPA is serving as a cooperating agency on the EIS, and in coordination with the EIS and in cooperation with the EPA, OSMRE prepared a separate socioeconomic analysis to evaluate the demographic, economic community facilities and services and land use effects of the proposed designation. Through completion of the socioeconomic analysis OSMRE ensured that both the potentially impacted communities and the related services with a potential to be indirectly affected were identified. OSMRE also prepared a separate Community Engagement Plan in cooperation with the EPA. The Plan identifies specific strategies to inform and engage the public including citizen advisory committees, public informational meetings and citizen interviews. Additionally, OSMRE separately prepared an Environmental Justice Analysis with the EPA. This analysis identifies minority, low-income populations, and less educated populations; the analysis then identifies potential effects to these populations in terms of water quality, socioeconomics, land uses and aesthetics.

### Goal #3

The Department will, on its own or in collaboration with partners, identify and address environmental impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations.

Performance Measures	2017 Target
Number of partnerships with others, including educational institutions and tribes, to share and benefit from specialized expertise in furthering environmental justice goals.	The Department determined a baseline of 127 partnerships in 2012.

**Goal #3 – Performance Measure #1** – “Number of partnerships with others, including educational institutions and tribes, to share and benefit from specialized expertise in furthering environmental justice goals.”

In 2015, DOI participated in **390 partnerships** relating to environmental justice communities (with all of the bureaus reporting the partnership data) or an estimated increase the number of partnerships with others for 2014 by 132. A sample listing of the DOI’s partnerships established in 2015 as well as those that might have changed over time is contained in **Appendix A** to this report (samples include information on partnerships initiated by BOEM, BIA, OSMRE, USGS, BOR, FWS and BLM). The sample information is not inclusive of all the partnerships DOI has entered with others related to furthering environmental justice goals but includes a good snapshot of the types of partnerships DOI enters into.



## Project Highlight:

An example of a partnership that is included in the Appendix A is:

### BLM and FWS: Mike Thompson Wildlife Area, South Spit Humboldt Bay, California

In partnership with Friends of the Dunes, BLM and FWS work together to provide the *Bay to Dunes Education Program* to 600 students a year. The program provides low income rural students (grades 3-6) with educational experiences, both in-class and field trips, exploring local bay, salt marsh, freshwater marsh, coastal forest, beach, and dune habitats. Cultural history is presented to help students understand the relationship of humans, past and present, to the ecology of the area.

## Goal #4

Use existing grant programs, training, and educational opportunities as available to aid and empower minority, low-income, and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities.

Performance Measures	2017 Target
Percentage of school facilities which are maintained in an acceptable condition based on a Facility Condition Index rating of “good.”	The Department determined a baseline of 65.9% in 2012. The target for 2017 is to be determined by BIA/BIE.

**Goal #4 – Performance Measure #1** – Percentage of school facilities which are maintained in an acceptable condition based on a Facility Condition Index rating of “good.”

Educational opportunities for tribal populations are largely determined by the availability of good schools and educational programs. Indian education is primarily the responsibility of Bureau of Indian Educational (BIE), which is a separate bureau under the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs (AS-IA). However, the operations and maintenance of schools on reservations is shared by the BIE and the BIA Division of Facilities Management and Construction.

BIA uses the total number of school facilities in the BIE inventory that are in acceptable condition for this goal. In FY2015, **72 percent of schools were rated in acceptable condition**, which is higher than the 2012 baseline; however, it is lower than the number reported last year.

To evaluate ways to and commit to creating better schools for tribal communities in 2014, the Secretary of the Interior issued Order No. 3334: *Restructuring the Bureau of Indian Education*, directing the AS-IA to redesign and restructure the BIE into “an innovative organization that will

improve operations for both tribally-controlled and BIE-operated schools.” To achieve this goal, and ensure American Indian children receive a high-quality education, DOI committed to five objectives, including building a responsive organization that provides resources, direction, and services to tribes so that they can help their students attain high levels of student achievement.

In 2015, BIA and BIE continued its work to meet the requirements of Secretarial Order 3334. Section 4(a) of the Order establishes the School Operations Division (SOD), which focuses on teacher and principal recruitment, acquisition and grants, school facilities, education technology, and communications. This year BIE and BIA were able to get plans approved for establishing the education technology, human resources (teacher and principal recruitment), and communications components. BIA and BIA continue to evaluate plans to create the acquisition and grants and school facilities components.

BIE is responsible for approximately 49,000 students, including 1,500 resident-only boarders; 7,074 teachers, administrators, and support staff in 183 school facilities; 15 Educational Resource Centers; four regional offices; and a headquarters office in Washington, DC. With such diverse stakeholders, the BIE identified three goals for the facilities transition: (1) ensure school facilities meet accreditation standards; (2) enable high quality education; and (3) provide a safe, healthy and appropriate learning environment for students, teachers, administrators, and staff.

### Project Highlight:

#### BIE: Transfer of Pueblo’s Elementary School to Full Tribal Control

In addition to evaluate school transfers between BIA and BIE for better operations, in 2015, BIE transferred the Pueblo’s elementary school to full tribal control. The transition is the first enabled by the Obama Administration’s Blueprint for Reform to promote educational self-determination for tribal communities and the President’s Generation Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative to improve the lives of Native youth by removing barriers to their success.



Secretary Jewell and Governor Torres cut the ribbon in a ceremony that celebrated that transfer of the operation and management of Isleta Elementary School to the Isleta Pueblo’s Tribal Council.

All of Isleta Pueblo’s leaders, including the new School Board and Pueblo administration staff, worked closely with BIE throughout the transition.

## Goal #5:

Integrate the Department's Environmental Justice Strategies with its Title VI of the Civil Rights Act enforcement responsibilities to improve efficiencies while preserving the integrity of Title VI and environmental justice activities.

Performance Measures	2017 Target
Percentage of Title VI environmental justice related complaints resolved or adjudicated.	The Department's baseline is to be determined by the Office of Civil Rights. The Department's 2017 target will subsequently be determined.
Percentage of civil rights compliance reviews where environmental justice is a review factor.	The Department determined a baseline of two in 2012; subsequently the Office of Civil Rights will determine targets.

**Goal #5 – Performance Measure #1-** “Percentage of Title IV environmental justice related complaints resolved or adjudicated.”

DOI is not reporting any cases as resolved or adjudicated in 2015 regarding environmental justice in Title VI complaints.

**Goal #5 – Performance Measure #2** – “Number of open civil rights compliance reviews where environmental justice is a review factor.”

For reporting purposes the DOI has changed the measure from “percentage of civil rights compliance reviews where environmental justice is a review factor” to “The number of open civil rights compliance reviews where environmental justice is a review factor.” DOI estimated one reported case under review in 2012 and this case remains open. The Department opened one new case in 2013. For 2015, **DOI's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has received one complaint** that appears to be environmental justice related. Currently, the BLM and BOR are processing the complaint.

The 2012 complaint involves the Texas County Commission court's approval of a mining permit in Austin, Texas which will interrupt the water table in a predominately Latino, African American, and Spanish speaking community. The FWS and Office of Civil Rights/Public Civil Rights (OCR/PCR) is processing this complaint. This complaint was accepted for review under the authority of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color and national origin in programs, activities, and services receiving federal financial assistance. This case remains open.

The 2013 complaint addresses whether the state of Indiana and the city of Gary, Indiana, provides public access that allows for adequate recreational services, specifically sport fishing opportunities in the predominantly minority communities in Gary, Indiana. The NPS and OCR/PCR are processing this complaint. This complaint was accepted for review under the authority of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color and national origin in programs, activities, and services receiving federal financial assistance.

## **VII. Climate Change Adaptation**

*“One of the biggest challenges we face, as you know, is climate change, and there ... are no people more affected by climate change in the United States than native people,”*

*- Secretary Jewell*

With responsibility for over 70,000 employees and more than 300,000 volunteers, service to 1.7 million American Indians and Alaska Natives, as host to about 400 million visitors each year, and as a source of electricity, water and other natural resources to significant sectors of the American economy and to communities adjacent to DOI-managed lands, the DOI understands that climate change will impact many people and environments. Much of the human activity of concern to the DOI occurs outdoors, in places where climate change impacts will be felt most acutely. The DOI is also responsible for advancing government-to-government trust relationships with American Indians and Alaska Natives and honoring commitments to insular areas.

The DOI’s 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which guides the Department’s actions going forward, provides high-level guiding principles in part focusing on impacts to natural and cultural resources, people and communities, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Insular Areas, and heritage resources. The DOI’s 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Plan also identifies work with minority populations and low income populations as a priority and responsibility under EO 12898, in order to anticipate and prepare for climate change impacts to their health, environment, and communities.

As noted in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan: It is a priority of DOI and a responsibility under Executive Order 12898 to work with minority populations, and low-income populations to anticipate and prepare for climate change impacts to their health, environment, and communities. To do so, bureaus should:

- Provide minority populations and low-income populations with the most recent climate change information and climate adaptation guidance.
- Participate in community capacity building, training, and outreach activities and provide technical assistance as appropriate for communities at greater risk.
- Expand and include minority populations and low-income populations and communities in science, mapping, research, data collection activities, and other studies as appropriate.

- Actively participate in the Intergovernmental Working Group on Environmental Justice.

Below are actions that DOI offices and bureaus have undertaken in 2015 to help environmental justice communities with climate adaptation:

#### USGS: Hydrologic Extremes and Aeolian Ecosystem Thresholds on Native lands

*“As climate change makes storms more severe, sound science provided by the U.S. Geological Survey becomes even more critical to help communities better predict and respond to natural disasters,”*

- Secretary Jewell

Drought in arid and semi-arid regions is often concurrent with the deterioration of surface vegetation and the destabilization of sand dunes, jeopardizing infrastructure and rangeland productivity. The USGS studies of drought and climate change impacts on sand dune deposits on the Navajo Nation have shown that some residents are currently faced with periodic transportation problems from sand and dust storms during windy conditions. Dusty conditions are also deleterious to human health, and have been known to cause dust pneumonia and conditions such as valley fever; the literature on fungi and bacteria in dust that can affect human health is a growing field of research, and new forms of illness from dust inhalation are being uncovered. Sand and dust problems are especially acute for residents located downwind of dry lake beds or on the sand dune deposits on the downwind sides of dry streams or washes where the supply of sediment is higher.

The USGS is researching Hydrologic Extremes and Aeolian Ecosystem Thresholds on lands of the Navajo Nation and is conducting field experiments on the effects of various types of vegetation on wind erosion. Because the annual invasive tumbleweed plant (*Salsola*) does not shelter areas from wind erosion during the spring windy season, USGS researchers are also experimenting with methods for the reintroduction of native grass species and removal of *Salsola*, in order to determine the conditions and methods required for rangeland restoration projects to be effective. Additional plans include developing new models and maps that can be used to identify areas most susceptible to wind erosion during dry, windy conditions, thus improving the ability to predict wind erosion susceptibility as temperatures increase.

#### USGS: Northwest Wetland and Climate Modeling

The USGS Western Ecological Research Center works with coastal tribes in the Pacific Northwest and is conducting on-the-ground research on tribal lands. The climate science program has identified tidal marshes vulnerable to sea-level rise and conducted workshops for the Nisqually and Skokomish Tribes where results were presented on loss of these habitats under climate change scenarios. Furthermore, precipitous declines in threatened Nisqually Fall Chinook related to record high temperatures and low snowmelt during summer 2015 have illustrated how vulnerable this prized cultural resource and livelihood is to changes in climate, highlighting the importance of wetland monitoring and climate modeling. The restoration science

program jointly worked with the Nisqually Indian Tribe to document that large river delta restorations have increased rearing opportunities and suitable habitat for salmonids, and that as the restoration progresses, water temperatures in restored channels are becoming cooler as the channels deepen.

#### BIA: Tribal Climate Resilience Program

*“These funds will help the American Indian and Alaska Native communities on the front lines of climate change prepare, plan and build capacity,”*

- Secretary Jewell

As part of the Obama Administration’s effort to prepare communities for the impacts of climate change, BIA awarded \$11.8 million in Tribal Climate Resilience Program funding awards. The funding will help federally recognized tribes and tribally chartered organizations with climate change adaptation and ocean and coastal management planning projects.

Projects will help tribes plan, train and participate in technical workshops and forums, while also supporting coastal tribes as they address the unique challenges of coastal erosion and development, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and emergency management.

A total of 104 awards totaling \$11,813,714 have been made in five categories:

- Category 1: Trainings and Workshops – Awards: 7, Total Funding: \$823,407
- Category 2: Climate Adaptation Planning – Awards: 39, Total Funding: \$6,210,607
- Category 3: Travel (Climate) – Awards: 28, Total Funding: 619,940
- Category 4: Ocean and Coastal Management Planning – Awards: 23, Total Funding: \$3,837,454
- Category 5: Travel (Ocean and Coastal) – Awards: 7, Total Funding: \$322,306

The funds build on nearly \$2.3 million awarded in December 2014 to more than 40 tribes and tribal organizations to support climate preparedness and resilience activities.

#### OSMRE: Climate Change Training and Policies

OSMRE has begun an examination of its regulatory requirements and policies to assess the potential of how climate change could worsen the frequency or intensity of environmental impacts related to coal mining. For example, OSMRE is looking at whether its requirements for impoundment design are adequate to address increased frequency and intensity of storm events. OSMRE is also developing training for OSMRE and state regulatory authority staff to ensure that they are aware of how climate change could affect their regulatory responsibilities in the permitting, and oversight of mining activities. The training will also increase consideration of these issues during the planning of active and abandoned mine site reclamation projects so that techniques and planting plans can be adjusted to ensure success. Successful reclamation efforts are critical to reducing effects on downstream communities now and in the future.



### BOR: Drought Response Program

One of the four key goals in BOR's Climate Adaptation Strategy is to enhance climate adaptation planning. In 2015, BOR initiated a new Drought Response Program to provide assistance for drought contingency planning and projects supporting climate adaptation. Tribes are eligible and encouraged to apply for funding under this program.

Under the Drought Response Program, funding for drought contingency plans and drought resiliency projects is allocated on a competitive basis for plans that are collaborative and which will incorporate climate change information, and for projects that will increase water management flexibility in times of drought. In the first year of program funding, two grants were awarded to Tribes.

Tule River Tribe, Painted Rock Improvements Project Reclamation Funding: \$261,053, Total Project Cost: \$522,106. The Tule River Tribe of south-central California will raise an existing crib dam on the South Fork of the Tule River. The project increases the water level at the intake for Tribe's primary water supply by 51%, by adding 1.7 acre-feet of storage capacity. In addition to increasing the storage capacity, this project will help ensure that the intake structure remains submerged through periods of drought so that the Tribe can continue to draw water into its treatment facility. The project will help the Tribe make use of more of their water entitlement and alleviate potable water shortages. As a result of the most recent drought, the Tribe was forced to truck water onto the Reservation and has not been able to maintain sufficient water supply or pressure in the fire suppression system. The historic drought levels pose an imminent threat to public health, property, and the economy of the Tule River Indian Reservation. This project will assist the Tribe in obtaining the resilient infrastructure necessary to protect the public health, safety and economy of the Tribe.

Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations, Regional Drought Contingency Plan for the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer Region Reclamation Funding: \$187,081. Total Project Cost: \$387,442. The Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations will prepare a Regional Drought Contingency Plan for their homeland in south-central Oklahoma. The Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer covers approximately 500 miles and is the principal source of water for more than 100,000 people, supplies water for mining and irrigation, and is the source for nearly 100 known springs that are culturally important and generate approximately \$100 million in tourism revenues per year. The area experienced an exceptional drought from 2010 until the spring 2015, causing significant economic hardship and requiring emergency actions, such as hauling water and drilling emergency wells. A wide range of regional stakeholders, representing numerous sectors, will support the drought planning process. The plan will identify mitigation and response actions that can be implemented at the local and regional levels.

### OIA: Grants for Protection and Management of Coral Reef Ecosystems

In 2015, OIA announced \$926,328 in grant assistance through the Coral Reef Initiative Program for projects and initiatives designed to improve the health and management of coral reefs in the



American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the freely associated states of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Some of the projects funded included:

- Guam Bureau of Statistics and Planning (Guam) - \$131,800 to promote conservation awareness through education and outreach on the importance of Guam's reefs to the island's culture; to establish a Coral Reef Resilience Coordinator; to conduct a hydrological study of the Toguan Watershed to develop strategies for its management; and to support participation in the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meetings.
- U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) The Nature Conservancy (St. Croix, USVI) - \$50,000 for coral reef restoration within the St. Croix East End Marine Park by transplanting elkhorn and staghorn coral colonies, grown in The Nature Conservancy's coral nursery, to sites characterized as high-value for restoration and recovery of these two threatened species of Caribbean coral.
- U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (U.S. Virgin Islands) - \$131,088 to develop a strategic plan to improve the enforcement capacity and effectiveness of the Division of Environmental Enforcement; and to evaluate the connectivity of coral reef species between managed and unmanaged areas to strengthen local management of the 43 Marine Protected Areas in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- Palau International Coral Reef Center (Republic of Palau) - \$110,000 to characterize and manage the recovery of Palauan coral reefs following recent catastrophic damage from super-typhoons Bopha and Haiyan.
- Micronesia Conservation Trust (Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia)- \$150,000 to work with local governments, non-governmental organizations, and communities to conduct a vulnerability assessment on Pohnpei's 5,500 hectares of mangrove forest to identify threats and specific adaptation actions; assess the feasibility of funding habitat conservation by marketing carbon credits; and share project results to catalyze similar projects throughout Micronesia and help achieve the goals of the Micronesia Challenge.
- College of the Marshall Islands (Republic of the Marshall Islands) - \$121,572 to establish a national, publicly-accessible, spatial analytics facility on the campus of the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI); to build capacity in participatory Geographic Information System (GIS) management by training CMI and government staff on building a national geospatial clearinghouse; to compile and augment the conservation database; and to conduct a short-course on GIS for use in sustainable coastal management.

#### BOR and FWS: Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

The BOR co-leads two Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) with the FWS. Both the Desert and Southern Rockies LCCs include tribal participation. The LCCs are focused on

developing tools to support climate adaptation by resource managers, including tribes. The following are examples of 2015 LCC efforts that support climate adaptation by tribes:

*Developing a Geodatabase and Geocollaborative Tools to Support Springs and Springs-dependent Species Management*

The Desert LCC funded the Museum of Northern Arizona, Inc. to help resource managers in the southwestern U.S. collect, analyze, report, monitor and archive the complex and interrelated information associated with springs and spring-dependent species in the region by developing a springs geodatabase. This project resulted in interactive online maps and climate change risk assessment tools of springs-dependent sensitive plant and animal species. These tools have provided the Hualapai, Hopi, and Yavapai-Apache tribes with training, a secure online database of springs within their jurisdiction, and a landscape-scale Climate Change Risk Model for integration into tribal climate adaptation plans.

*Tribal Leaders Summit on Climate Change: A Focus on Climate Adaptation Planning and Implementation:*

With FWS funding, the Desert LCC partnered with the University of Arizona's Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions (CCASS) / Haury Native Nations Climate Adaptation Program (NNCAP) to host the Tribal Leaders Summit on Climate Change: A Focus on Climate Adaptation Planning and Implementation, November 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This event brought together Tribal leaders, practitioners, researchers, and educators from across the country who are engaged in Tribal climate change adaptation work. The workshop highlighted Tribal Nations that have existing climate adaptation plans and provided an opportunity to share lessons learned from a tribal perspective and build support for wider tribal climate adaptation planning and implementation work. This event also identified 1) successful examples of incorporation of traditional knowledge in the development of climate adaptation plans, 2) tribal needs in managing climate risks, adaptation planning and funding, and 3) best practice strategies that could be shared widely across indigenous groups. The Desert LCC and its partners will be building on this event in 2016 with those tribes who have not yet begun climate adaptation planning but are interested in learning from their peers and other experts.

*Assessment of connectivity and enhancement of adaptive management capacity on Navajo Nation lands*

The Southern Rockies LCC supported the Navajo Nation, Department of Fish and Wildlife (NNDFW) to build adaptive capacity into the administration and implementation of their wildlife management ten-year strategic plan that includes adaptive management. Specifically, the project evaluated the potential effects of land-use change and disturbances on habitat quality, connectivity, and by extension, likelihoods of species persistence. During the project period, results were presented in a symposium on the effects of climate change on Native Americans on the Colorado Plateau, which was included in the Biennial Conference of Research on the

Colorado Plateau (Flagstaff, Arizona). Also, results were presented in a workshop on effects of climate change on the Navajo Nation that was coordinated by the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources.

#### FWS: Climate Adaption Network

FWS created the Climate Adaptation Network (CAN) an advisory group of FWS-wide managers that developed recommendations for the Directorate on how FWS can better address the impacts of climate change on our trust resources, program and policies, operations and investments. In 2016, the Service will release details on implementation of approved recommendations. Outlined within the Department Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan, Climate Change is a priority goal.

#### BLM: Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative

The BLM is the primary funder of the Great Basin LCC which has sponsored a number of projects supporting tribal capacity to respond to climate change. These projects include climate change adaptation training workshops and a document to show climate change responses by two Great Basin tribes.

#### FWS: Coastal Barrier Resource Act

The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary), through FWS, is responsible for administering the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA). The Secretary reviews and edits the CBRA at least every five years to reflect changes in coastal barriers from natural forces. In an era of climate change and hurricanes, the CBRA is a protection to people and fish and wildlife habitat. It keeps people out of harms way by discouraging construction in risk areas where hurricanes strike first. Coastal barriers serve as the mainland's first line of defense against storm surges and hurricane winds.

FWS consults with federal, state and local officials and stakeholders on the FWS updates to the mapping of coastal barrier resources. The updated maps are part of an interagency "digital conversion" effort between FWS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Digital conversion maps have already been adopted by FWS for 44% of the acreage of the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), and the FWS and FEMA plan to produce updated maps for most of the remainder of the CBRS by 2016. The digital conversion effort was undertaken to improve the accuracy, integrity, and usability of the CBRS data and maps. This effort will help improve government efficiency and customer service by providing more reliable and user-friendly CBRS maps and digital data to the public. The final CBRS boundaries produced through this digital conversion effort will also be shown on FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

#### NPS: Climate Friendly Parks Program

The Climate Friendly Parks (CFP) Program is one of many initiatives supporting the NPS's

Green Parks Plan. The program provides parks with the tools and resources to address climate change and ensure the most sustainable operations across the agency. National parks, because of their location and unique, protected resources, are places where the effects of climate change are particularly noticeable. The program provides national parks with comprehensive support to address climate change within park boundaries and within surrounding communities. Ninety-seven NPS Park Units are currently participating in the Climate Friendly Parks program. The goals of the CFP Program include:

- Measure park-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Educate staff, partners, stakeholders, and the public about climate change and demonstrate ways individuals and groups can take action to address the issue
- Assist parks in developing strategies and specific actions to address sustainability challenges, reduce GHG emissions, and anticipate the impacts of climate change on park resources.

#### BOEM: Climate Change in NEPA Documents and Environmental Studies

BOEM addresses climate change in its programmatic analyses of environmental impacts and considers the effects of agency actions on vulnerable communities. The effects of shoreline change and storm surge for example, can exacerbate impacts on communities that are already vulnerable. In addition, BOEM continues to study impacts of a changing climate through its Environmental Studies Program, analyzing data on sea ice variability in the Arctic and trends in whale distribution patterns.

### **VIII. EJ IWG MAKING A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE IN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITIES:**

The following information was provided by the EPA to describe the work that has been completed in 2015 by the IWG:

In 2015, the EJ IWG devoted time to building an infrastructure for federal agencies to directly address the environmental, social, economic, and public health burdens in minority, low-income, indigenous and tribal communities. The 2011 Charter was revised to include a governance structure and a requirement for Federal agency senior leadership to meet twice a year to discuss agency collaborative efforts and commitments to help achieve environmental justice. The EJ IWG's governance structure includes the following standing (permanent) committees:

- Public Participation
- Regional Interagency Working Groups
- Strategy and Implementation Progress Reports
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

In addition, consistent with the Presidential Memorandum issued with the Executive Order 12898, and based on public recommendations, every three years the EJ IWG determines if there are additional focus areas for federal agencies to consider and address. During fiscal years 2016 – 2018, the EJ IWG will maintain committees to address the following five focus areas:

- Native Americans/Indigenous Peoples,
- Rural Communities,
- Impacts from Climate Change,
- Impacts from Commercial Transportation (Goods Movement),
- National Environmental Policy Act.

These committees consist of senior level federal agency staff and are responsible for working together with state and local governments, tribes, and local communities to improve the health of communities and protect the environment across this country.

The following is a snapshot of the EJ IWG’s efforts to advance environmental justice in FY 15:

#### *Collaboration and Interagency Governance Structure*

- Developed the Draft FY 2016-2018 EJ IWG Action Agenda Framework and disseminated for public comment. (As a result of one of the public comments, the EJ IWG has changed the name of the document to “EJ IWG FY 2016-2018 Framework for Collaboration”). The Framework builds on decades of environmental justice work to focus the collective efforts of the federal agencies to improve the quality of life and support economic opportunity in overburdened and under- resourced communities. The Framework is available on:  
<http://www3.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/interagency/index.html>.
- Completed significant National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work products: Draft Report on Promising Practices for Environmental Justice Methodologies in NEPA Reviews and a companion training module based on the promising practices. The Draft Report provides a framework for meaningful engagement, developing and selecting alternatives and identifying minority and low-income populations.
- Launched the Educate, Motivate and Innovate (EMI) Climate Justice Youth Leadership Initiative. The EMI Initiative will showcase innovative climate justice projects and their impacts that are being done across the country by students attending Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).
- Developed the structure for a Goods Movement Resource Compendium. The Compendium will outline Agency legal authorities, roles and responsibilities and serve as a resource for communities addressing goods movement concerns.

- Strengthened collaboration with communities by forming Regional Interagency Workgroups and featuring innovative community-based interagency collaborative projects at monthly EJ IWG meetings.

### *Outreach*

- Increased outreach to the public by holding three webinars seeking public comment on the Draft FY 2016-2018 EJ IWG Action Agenda Framework which attracted over 350 participants,
- Advanced collaboration on Climate Justice topics by featuring a series of leading Climate Justice advocates at the March 2015 National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program,
- Strengthened the delivery of technical assistance to small, underserved communities through the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP).

Increased coordination and cooperation among federal agencies will promote holistic community-based solutions to environmental justice issues and ensure that the public has meaningful opportunities for participation in the decision-making process.

## **IX. Next Steps**

This progress report highlights many of the programs and activities that DOI has engaged in throughout 2015 that support the spirit and intent of Executive Order 12898. This report describes several ways that DOI has been implementing environmental justice within the scope of its mission, and areas of jurisdiction and special expertise.

DOI's 2015 Annual Implementation Report and related environmental justice information will be publically available on the DOI's environmental justice website at: (<http://www.doi.gov/oepe/justice.html>).

Public comments on this report as well as the DOI's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan are welcomed at any time, and may be submitted to: [Environmental\\_Justice@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Environmental_Justice@ios.doi.gov).

DOI looks forward to collaborating with federal, tribal, and local governments, as well as all interested parties and stakeholders as we continue to implement and integrate environmental justice into our programs and policies.